Untapped Resources: Women and Municipal Government in Nova Scotia

Report

Women in Local Government Project

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Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women

YWCA

NOVA SCOTIA
Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations

Untapped Resources:
Women and Municipal Government in Nova Scotia

Final Report of the
Women in Local Government Project

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Women In Local Government Project

The Women in Local Government Project is a partnership of the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women and the Halifax YWCA, with support from Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

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Foreword

In Nova Scotia, women are under-represented in municipal government. Women make up more than 50 per cent of Nova Scotia's population yet only 21.7 per cent of municipal councillors (the third lowest in Canada), seven per cent of wardens and mayors and only 14.5 per cent of chief administrators (the lowest in Canada).

Municipal governments make decisions that affect people's daily lives. Without the input of women, in all their diversity – as politicians, board members and citizens and as voters – municipal leaders have too little information about how their decisions affect the people they serve.

Women are actively engaged in their communities. They are interested in participating in municipal decision-making, however, for a variety of reasons they are not involved.

Why is it important that more women become involved in municipal government? Increasing women's participation will help ensure that municipal governments reflect the populations they serve. It will increase the range of people who make decisions and who have input into decision making. It will promote democracy by ensuring women's perspectives are counted. In short, it will make municipal government more relevant to its citizens. It will also increase the talent pool available to municipalities.

I would like to thank the members of our steering committee and working group for all of their efforts in putting this document together. I would also like to thank our partners—the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women and the Halifax YWCA for their support for the project. Special thanks also go to Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations for their generous financial contribution and staff support. Finally, I thank the women who shared their experiences and insights in the focus group sessions.

It has been exciting to be involved in this timely project. Now the challenge begins with discussion of the report's findings and implementation of the recommendations.

I look forward to working with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities and our other partners in moving this project forward.

Mayor Anna Allen
Chair, Women in Local Government Committee

Eighty-five years and counting

In 1920, Laura Haliburton Moore of Wolfville became the first woman in Nova Scotia to be elected to a municipal council. In spite of this and other historical firsts (Gladys Muriel Porter of Kentville was the first woman mayor in the Maritimes and Daurene Lewis of Annapolis Royal was the first black woman mayor in North America), 85 years after Haliburton Moore joined the Wolfville council, Nova Scotia lags Canada and much of the world for women's participation in local government decision-making. While women constitute 52 per cent of Nova Scotia's population, today only 21.7 per cent of Nova Scotia's municipal councillors are women. Women are even more under-represented at the level of mayors and wardens: Among Nova Scotia's 55 municipalities, only four women head municipal councils in Nova Scotia. Women are similarly under-represented in senior administrative positions in Nova Scotia's municipal governments. At 14.5 per cent, Nova Scotia has the lowest percentage of women chief administrators in Canada. The national average is 50 per cent.

It's time for change.

Why do we need more women in municipal decision-making?

> Democratic justice and equity demands that our institutions not exclude half the electorate from the exercise of political power at every level. Without correspondence between the population and institutions representing it, the very legitimacy of our democratic institutions is called into question (Conrad, 2003; p. 88).

Strengthening women's participation in local government decision-making is a fundamentally democratic issue. It is widely acknowledged that when women have little presence in decision-making bodies, their interests and concerns are often left off the policy agenda (WEDO, 2005; United Nations, 2002; FCM-IMDC, 2002; Purdon, 2004).

It's a matter of good governance. If decisions made by municipal governments are to be representative of and responsive to the needs of both women and men, both women and men must be participants in and have input to the decisions that affect their daily lives. When women are not consulted, when they are not at the table, municipal leaders are making decisions without the complete picture of how their decisions affect their citizens' lives.

To assume that women and men have equal opportunities for participation or benefit equally from initiatives can unintentionally result in an increase in gender inequality (United Nations, 2002; pp 3-5). Women's lives, needs and perspectives are often different from those of men. By virtue of their gender, women are subject to experiences and knowledge that men often are not. Not only do women continue to do the vast majority of unpaid household management and care-giving labour in addition to their paid employment, they do much of the country's volunteer labour, they are at a higher risk of

violence from their partners, they are more often poor, and they continue to earn less money than men, even as full-time employees.

It is also important to avoid assuming that all women or all men share the same needs and perspectives: There are differences among women and men that relate to class, race, religion, age, ethnicity and other factors. Understanding that decisions made by municipal governments may impact different women and men differently underlines the importance of the participation of and consultation with a broad range of diverse individuals.

A 2004 Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) study on women's participation in municipal decision-making confirms that there are many women who would like to be more actively involved in municipal government decision-making (Purdon, 2004). In the absence of 52 per cent of the population, municipal governments waste an available and significant pool of knowledge and talent. Women bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to the decision-making table. As the population ages, the available workforce shrinks, and governments look for new blood and new ideas to tackle old and new problems, municipal governments must recognize the importance of engaging more women in decision-making. Having a better balance and representation of women and men in municipal decision-making can only lead to "to better development and local governance" (FCM, 1996: p. 4).

The UNSM resolution

In the fall of 2004, a resolution was passed at the annual meeting of the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities' (UNSM) challenging the organization to address women's under-representation in local government. The resolution mandated the UNSM to strike a steering committee to identify barriers to women's participation in municipal government and make recommendations at the following year's conference as to how more women could be engaged in decision-making.

Recognizing that other organizations could provide valuable support and insight, the UNSM joined forces with the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women and the Halifax YWCA. Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations provided financial and staff support.

A steering committee was established to oversee a working committee committed to driving what has become known as the Women In Local Government (WILG) Project. Through the WILG Project's terms of reference, the UNSM Board of Directors asked the steering committee to research the barriers to women's participation in municipal government and pursue the following objectives:

- Identify the opportunities to better involve women as citizens and as politicians in municipal government
- Recommend measures to involve women in all their diversity in consultation and engagement activities of municipal government
- Recommend measures for recruiting and retaining women in municipal electoral politics

Research Methodology

The research for Nova Scotia's WILG project included a review of existing studies and initiatives concerned with women's engagement in politics and municipal government, a survey of Nova Scotia's 55 municipalities, and six focus groups that addressed women's experiences and perspectives on participation in municipal government decision-making.

Prior studies

A review of existing studies and initiatives reveals that considerable work is being done nationally and internationally to understand and increase women's participation in government decision-making, particularly at the elected level. There have also been a number of efforts and studies that addressed women's participation through consultation processes, particularly in Canada's urban centres. Of particular significance to the WILG project are the FCM's' national research project on increasing women's participation in municipal decision-making (Purdon, 2004) and a supporting study conducted by the YWCA in the Halifax Regional Municipality. Comprehensive and insightful, these reports identify many barriers – practical and systemic – that prevent women from having a voice in local government. Studies of rural women leaders' perspectives on electoral participation in Atlantic Canada also provide insight.

There is a need however to bring a Nova Scotia focus to the issue of women's participation and address the following questions:

- What is the existing situation with regard to women's participation in municipal decision-making in Nova Scotia?

- Why do Nova Scotia women not fully participate in municipal decision-making?

- What needs to happen for more women, and women who represent all Nova Scotians, to become involved in municipal decision-making?

Survey of Nova Scotia Municipalities

In order to establish the existing picture of women's participation in municipal decision-making, a survey was developed and sent to the head administrators of Nova Scotia's 55 municipalities. The survey asked for information regarding the number of women and men represented on municipal boards and committees, gender representation among management and non-management staff, and efforts municipalities make to facilitate women's participation in decision-making. The survey provided significant insight into how women are currently participating in municipal government. (A summary of the data can be found in the appendix of this report.)

Focus groups

Six focus groups with Nova Scotia women were held across the province in July 2005. Approximately one-third of the participants in the focus groups were currently elected officials, or women who had previously held, or run for elected office at the municipal level. Another third of the participants were employed in municipal government, while the final third consisted of women involved in community affairs and other interested individuals.

Representative of urban and rural populations, the women who participated in the focus groups included every decade in age between 20 and 80, a range of life experiences, and perspectives from across the political spectrum. Many of the participants were mothers -- some with young children or teenagers, others with grown-up children who had left home. Most were employed -- some of them self-employed -- while others had retired from paid employment to pursue other interests. We had some representation from

black women, however no one identified herself as aboriginal, Acadian, as a person with disabilities, or on the basis of sexual orientation.

In spite of their obvious differences, the focus group participants and researchers found a great deal of common ground by virtue of their experience as women. The richness of these discussions provided insight to the researchers, and most participants left with an increased appreciation of the challenges and experiences that make women's lives distinct and that influence their ability and interest in participating in government decision-making.

The data gleaned from the survey was compiled and analyzed, discussions from the focus groups were documented, and together with the findings of previous studies, form the basis of this report.

Women's Participation in Municipal Government Decision-Making in Nova Scotia

Nationally and internationally, considerable research and work is being done to address the under-representation of women in government decision-making. Much of this concerns women's participation as elected officials. However it is important to realize that holding elected office is but one of several ways in which citizens may become involved with municipal government. Women have input to municipal decision-making as voters, by participating in consultation processes, by working on municipal boards and committees, as elected officials, and in staff positions, particularly at the senior level.

A review of the numbers of women currently involved with municipal government in Nova Scotia illustrates that from more than half the population come just one-fifth of municipal councillors and seven per cent of mayors and wardens. While women make up 29% of management employees in Nova Scotia municipalities[1], they represent only 14.5 per cent of chief administrators.

Overall women are under-represented on boards, commissions and committees. They make up 30 per cent of the total membership of boards and commissions, 25 per cent of board and commission chairs, and one-third of citizen representatives. [2] The WILG survey data also tells us that men particularly dominate committees and boards that deal with issues such as infrastructure, finance, planning and public safety, while most women are appointed to committees concerned with heritage and parks and recreation. No information is available on the number of women versus men who vote, and only four of the 38 municipalities that responded collect data on who attends public consultations.

[1] WILG project survey results – 38 of 55 municipalities responded.
[2] Ibid

General barriers to women's participation in municipal government decision-making

In the research for this project, three overarching themes emerged as influences on and impediments to women's participation in municipal government decision-making: a general lack of awareness among the public about the role of municipal government in people's day-to-day lives; a general lack of understanding of the gendered-nature of public institutions and the decisions that emerge from them; and, women's socio-economic status in Nova Scotia.

1.) Lack of awareness of the importance of municipal government in people's day-to-day lives

Participants in the focus groups suggested that there is a general lack of awareness among Nova Scotians of the role, impact and importance of municipal government in people's day-to-day lives. This is also a message of the 2004 FCM study of women's participation in municipal government decision-making across Canada. This point is critical as awareness is the first step to increasing women's political consciousness, which in turn leads to an awareness of ways to become involved and affect change. Voter turnout for municipal elections (which varies among municipalities) is relatively low compared with provincial and federal elections,[3] although it is unclear to what extent this has to do with a lack of awareness. Focus group participants noted however, that women may not become involved with or aware of the extent to which municipal government decision making affects their lives until an issue arises that directly affects them or family members.

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[3] At 47%, eligible voter turnout in the fall 2004 municipal elections was higher than usual Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations attributes the higher turnout to the provincial plebiscite on Sunday shopping

2. General lack of understanding of the gendered nature of public institutions and the decisions that emerge from them

A historical analysis of the development of public institutions in the Western world demonstrates that public institutions are neither gender-, class-, nor colour-neutral. Indeed, they were developed for, by, and with the assumption that the membership would constitute, a particular group of men (white) of a particular socio-economic status (usually married, and of the middle and upper classes). The norms, practices and culture of our public institutions today were built on these assumptions. While women and persons of color have managed to gain entry to public institutions, historically constructed assumptions continue to impact whose interests are served and how, what types of knowledge and experience are valued, who gets elected and promoted, and why and what the rules and expectations are with regard to practices, procedural matters and acceptable behaviour (Mies, 1986; Vickers, 1997). The 2004 FCM study notes that "women who are marginalized because of race, ethnicity, poverty, immigration study, age, sexual orientation or disability" in addition to their gender face many more systemic barriers, "participate in municipal processes at low levels, and often do not vote" (Purdon, 2004;p. 10).

The FCM report and feedback from the WILG focus group participants indicate that there is a major need for "more training and awareness-raising activities for municipal staff and elected officials in the areas of racism, gender and anti-oppression work" (Purdon, 2004; p. 10). The results of the WILG survey indicated that among the 38 municipalities that responded, only three Nova Scotia municipalities offer diversity training to their staff and councillors and eight have some form of affirmative action strategy for management hiring.

3.) Socio-economic factors

In the last thirty years, Nova Scotia women have entered the workforce in unprecedented numbers. Women represent nearly half (47.5 per cent) of the available labour force (McFayden, 2004). Today, 69% of women with children have some type of paid employment in addition to their unpaid labour in the home (McFayden, 2004). Women in Nova Scotia continue to do a disproportionate share of Nova Scotia's unpaid labour in addition to their paid labour (McFayden, 2004). Nova Scotia women do the majority of unpaid household management, care giving and community work, frequently in addition to paid employment (McFayden, 2004)

Women continue to earn less money than men. In 2003, women working full time for the full year in Nova Scotia made only 68.9 cents for every dollar earned by men., down from 71 cents in 2001 (McFayden, 2004). Sixty-one per cent of employed Nova Scotia women work in low-paying clerical/administrative and sales/service occupations (McFayden, 2004).

Women are more likely to be poor than men and have access to fewer financial resources. In particular, nearly half (47.5%) of lone-parent families headed by a woman have low levels of income. Lone parent families headed by women are five times more likely to be living in poverty than couple families, and more than twice as likely to live in poverty as lone parent families headed by men (McFayden, 2004).

Access to childcare, assistance with elder care and availability of transportation (or lack thereof) seriously impacts women's ability to participate in municipal government decision-making processes, particularly among women who live in rural areas and urban women who live in poverty. Two thirds of women with children under three have paid employment, yet only 8% of children with mothers in the paid labour force have a regulated

child care space.[4] Without access to childcare support, women with children are not able to consider elected office and cannot participate in public consultations. Lack of available childcare also makes it difficult for women to pursue full-time employment and educational development as municipal staff. In the absence of accessible public transportation, having to travel many miles to work, or to attend council or board meetings or public consultations is simply not possible without access to a vehicle.

It is also important to understand that in couple households that appear to have resources available (for example, income, vehicles and Internet access), household dynamics and relations of power mean that women do not always have the same access to or control over resource as their partners.

Factor in age, race, ethnicity, living with a disability and the situation is further complicated and difficult for women.

Recognizing these socio-economic factors is important because they demonstrate that many women may not have the time and resources available to access or become involved in municipal government as it presently operates. They also point to the need to hear from diverse women impacted by these factors as their experiences are often different from those who currently have input into municipal decision-making and those decisions may impact them differently. Furthermore, by recognizing and understanding these factors, municipal governments can find ways to help more women have input to municipal government decision-making.

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[4] Source: *Early Childhood Care and Education in Canada: Provinces and Territories, 2001*. University of Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2002 (cited in McFadyen, Sandra D. Paid and Unpaid Work: Women in Nova Scotia. Part 5 of a Statistical Series. Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women. May 2004. p. 41)

Women's electoral participation in municipal government

In studies on women's participation in government decision-making, two distinct, but inter-related themes emerge:

- the need for more women in formal decision-making (holding elected office, holding senior staff positions in municipalities, sitting on municipal boards and commissions, participating in public consultations and voting)

- the need for more inclusive and women-friendly policies, processes and government structures.

The 2004 FCM study found that women "may have given up on municipal government as a way of making change [believing] that their voices go unheard and that their participation does not lead to meaningful change"(Purdon, 2004; p. 10). While Atlantic Canadian women are extremely active in their communities, many are reluctant to run for elected office (Carbert, 2003; Carbert & Black, 2003).

According to the FCM report, a New Zealand study determined that in elected institutions, a minimum of 15 per cent of the elected membership must be women in order for women's priorities to be heard (Purdon, 2004; p. 19). However, a much higher percentage -- a critical mass of women -- is necessary to have an impact on policy, process and political culture (Purdon, 2004; p. 19). The Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing concurred and designated a minimum of 30 per cent as the necessary critical mass (United Nations, 1995). Research conducted by the Electoral Commission of the United Kingdom suggests that having more women elected representatives also encourages higher participation rates among women[5]. The election of a significant number of women to public office is

[5] Women and Equality Unit. Government of the United Kingdom
http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/public_life/parliament.htm

critical if government is to become more responsive to and inclusive of women's interests and priorities.

Ninety-two per cent of Atlantic Canadians support having more women elected to government office (CRIC, 2005). The FCM study (Purdon 2004) and the discussions around the table at the WILG focus groups confirm that in spite of the general barriers outlined in the previous section, many women would like to run for and hold elected office. But there are complex reasons why they don't.

Why women don't pursue elected offic

The WILG focus group discussions plus a review of previous studies reveal a variety of complex deterrents to women seeking and holding elected office. These include the need to earn a viable income, difficulty accessing resources such as childcare and transportation, a lack of institutional supports, age discrimination, sexist assumptions about women's role in society, social expectations and socialization patterns, concerns for impact on family members, media scrutiny and treatment of women politicians, lack of experience in political parties and political campaigns, and a distaste for and negative perceptions about the culture of politics.

The need to earn a viable income

For many women the need to earn a viable income to support themselves and their families stands in the way of them seeking elected office. With some exceptions, councillors in attendance at focus groups noted that remuneration for council work was rarely the sole household income source. The demands of paid employment (such as hours of work and the time required) may also conflict with council work. Councillors who attended the focus groups were often retired, self-employed or had other sources of income. In smaller municipalities, councillors seemed to have more success

at balancing the demands of full-time paid employment with council work. The smaller the population served, the more possible this appeared to be. At the opposite end of the scale, councillors from Nova Scotia's largest municipality noted that their remuneration enabled them, and the size of their constituencies required them, to treat their council work as full-time employment, thus freeing themselves of the need to find another income source. This may be a contributing factor to why women are more likely to be elected in the smallest or largest municipalities (Kushner et al, 1997, cited in Young, 2002; Gidengil and Vengroff, 1997).

Access to campaign financing

Participants in the focus groups noted that access to campaign financing is also a factor that impacts women's ability to run, and compete for, elected office. While one politician commented that she had successfully competed with a male opponent with much deeper pockets, many of the women noted that with no ceiling on campaign spending, those with significant sources of financing are at a distinct advantage over those without them.

Age discrimination

Many of the young women who attended the focus groups were politically active and interested in municipal as well as provincial and federal politics. Many of them commented that their age, intersecting with their gender seemed to be a disadvantage: People - electors and elected - didn't take them seriously. One young woman who had run for municipal council commented that when she was campaigning door to door, many constituents told her that they liked her ideas but to "come back in a few years" when she was older. Another older and experienced municipal politician in the same session commented that "people are afraid of young women."

Lack of prior experience in party politics and political campaigning

Party politics and selection processes play a major factor in women's candidacy and election at the provincial and national levels. Political parties act as gatekeepers that decide who gets nominated and who doesn't. Pitre (2003, p. 102) suggests that 'political capital" -- financial resources, networks, political experience, education and aptitudes -- and political motivation are essential elements for women's candidacy. Women may not have developed or be seen by others or by themselves to have developed as much political capital as a male candidate, making them less attractive as a candidate to political parties (Pitre, 2003; p. 102). In the theoretically non-partisan world of municipal politics, it is not clear what influence party politics may have on women's participation at the local level; however, women in the focus groups noted that female candidates with prior political experience and connections to political parties appeared to have an advantage over those without the contacts and experience in running a political campaign. This suggests that the extent of one's political capital may be a factor in municipal politics as well.

Public and media scrutiny of women politicians

Many of the women in attendance at the focus groups commented that women politicians' personal lives seem to come under much closer scrutiny by the media and the public. Many pointed to this year's media coverage of Belinda Stronach's crossover to the federal Liberal Party that focused much more on Ms. Stronach's personal life than on her reasons for this decision. The women at the table had their own stories of media and public scrutiny.

Social expectations regarding "appropriate" behaviour for women appears to be a Catch-22 for women in the political arena (Young, 2002; p. 19). Many women councillors noted that it can take years for them to have credibility and be accepted by their male counterparts. Several commented about not

being accepted until they became "one of the boys," suggesting that they had to conform to the behaviour and culture of the male-dominated council before they would be accepted. However, they also noted that when women do adopt the aggressive and competitive behaviours modeled by men in the political arena, they are often treated with contempt and assigned sexist and derogatory labels. Furthermore, many of the focus group participants noted that when a woman makes a political decision or offers an opinion which is unpopular, frequently the reaction of others is to attack her personally, using demeaning language (often with a sexual connotation) rather than focusing on the issue. On the other hand, women who model more "feminine" and conciliatory behaviours risk being ignored. A study by Gidengil and Everitt of television coverage of leaders' debates in recent Canadian elections (2002; cited in Young, 2002 p. 19) supports the perspective that women politicians are caught in a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" scenario. As Young says, "[women politicians] can either engage fully and be pilloried [in the media] for their behaviour, or act in a conciliatory manner and be ignored" (p. 19).

Treatment of women politicians by the public, by male colleagues, and by the media may be a deterrent to women's participation in political life, not only in terms of its impact on them individually, but also in terms of its impact on their families. Many of the WILG focus group participants expressed concerns about the impact of political life on their families. When women are so closely scrutinized, their families are also often subject to public attention. Participants noted, for example, that their decisions at Council might expose their families, particularly partners and children, to harassment from others.

Constituent expectations, economic development and patronage politics

Public and constituent expectations of municipal leaders appear to be a significant factor in women's reluctance to run for municipal office. Some

focus group participants felt that women may lack confidence and worry that they may not be able to live up to constituent expectations. They also noted that councillors are rarely recognized for the work they do and their successes ("Nobody ever says 'thank you'," commented one elected representative), but that people are quick to criticize when their expectations are not met.

In an essay on Canadian government ethics entitled "Small Town Canada", David Siegel (1994) supports this sentiment, commenting:

> The hands-on nature of decision-making that small-town politicians are more likely to find themselves in [results in] situations where they are called upon to make decisions that transparently affect themselves, their families, or their friends (or enemies). This situation personalizes decisions in small towns. When a municipal council is making decisions, it is frequently very clear which individuals and groups will benefit from a decision. (as cited in Carbert, 2003)

Carbert refers to women's "moral disapproval" of political life as a significant deterrent to their participation in electoral politics in Atlantic Canada. In a 2003 article in the *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Carbert notes that in her study of Atlantic Canadian rural women leaders the most strongly articulated deterrents to running for electoral office concerned the interaction between politics and what was described as the economic development industry (pp.166-67). Her study suggested that the perceived expectations of rural constituents regarding the role and responsibilities of their elected representatives and perceptions about the role and predominance of patronage politics have a significant impact on a woman's decision as to whether or not to run for office.

Culture of Council

Many of the women who attended the WILG focus groups sessions, including municipal politicians, expressed a discomfort with and distaste for

the aggressive and combative behaviour and disrespectful language that sometimes occurs at council meetings. Many called for municipal councils to adopt codes of behaviour that include the use of respectful and inclusive language. Participants noted that councillors should model behaviour that is reflective of their responsibilities and roles as leaders and representatives of their communities.

Women with experience as elected officials commented that once elected, they were often isolated, particularly in their early years on council. As mentioned earlier, many women noted that they were not readily accepted and welcomed into the "group" by their male counterparts on council, until they had become "one of the boys." This appeared to mean proving themselves by conforming to the culture, norms and behaviours of the male-dominated council. Many of them talked about having to work harder and longer than their male counterparts in order to have credibility. Of particular note was their difficulty in getting on to council committees, particularly those that were concerned with subjects traditionally viewed as male domains, like infrastructure, finance, land-use planning and public safety. The results of the WILG survey of Nova Scotia municipalities demonstrate that this is an accurate observation: While women represent 30 per cent of the total membership of all municipal committees across the 38 municipalities that responded to the survey, they are usually appointed to parks and recreation, and heritage committees, while men are asked to take on the rest. (For more on this see the section on women's participation in municipal boards and commissions on page 27 and the results of the WILG survey in the Appendix.)

Majority versus consensus-style decision-making

There was some discussion in focus groups around the adversarial nature of the winner-take-all, simple-majority rules for decision-making with the suggestion that women may prefer to work to a consensus. One participant

with considerable experience working with women-only and mixed boards, observed that women-only boards often work to a consensus-model of decision-making, rather than simple-majority style of decision-making. Another participant noted that the simple majority approach can have the affect of alienating minorities, particularly if the majority is represented by a single demographic (e.g., white male). Several elected women commented that when their municipal councils work to find a consensus before taking a final vote on a matter, the resulting decision is generally more acceptable to everyone concerned.

Conflicting and competing responsibilities

Elected women commented that personal, institutional, and public expectations regarding their responsibilities as elected officials sometimes conflicted and competed with personal, spousal, and societal expectations of their care giving and household management responsibilities. Institutional constraints often made this even more difficult, for example, when meetings were scheduled for times when women were busy making dinner for and supervising the homework of their children. Women noted that their male counterparts on council didn't seem to be concerned with the same priorities and responsibilities. Some municipal councils in Nova Scotia have attempted to accommodate their members' other commitments and responsibilities by consulting together to establish meeting times and locations rather than adhering to a rigid schedule.

Community-based work is more appealing

> Women work outside of municipal processes because they feel they can be more effective and exert more influence. Women with limited time want to work where they can make a difference (Purdon, 2004; p. 10).

Given the many factors that impede women's participation in municipal government decision-making, it is not surprising that many women feel they can accomplish a lot more working in community-based organizations with other women and without the pressure and hassles of the political arena.

What brings women in to elected politics at the municipal level?

"Women need to be asked to run."

A major theme in the discussions among focus group participants was that women need to be asked to run for elected office. Many of the women who had run revealed that they had been approached or encouraged by others, and noted that their encouragement of others to stand for office had been a significant factor in other women deciding to seek elected office. While this may not be unique to women (Brodie, 1985 p. 101) being asked or encouraged to run by others has had a significant impact on women's decisions since the 1940s. In a study of women candidates between 1945 and 1975, Brodie (1985) found that most of the women decided to run for elected office "only after encouragement by others" (p. 101). The Brodie study also noted that the active encouragement of family and close friends was key for woman candidates at all levels; at the municipal level, encouragement from colleagues in community groups also played a significant role (pp 101-102).

In the focus groups, women with experience in the political arena commented that the knowledge that they had supporters to help them out was key, as was the support and encouragement (or lack thereof) of their partners and families. Several noted that their initial exposure to municipal government and politics was often the result of getting involved in an issue that affected them or their children. Prior political experience also helped;

several had been previously elected to school boards and/or been involved with party politics.

Campaign financing and the size of the constituency

Access to campaign financing is also a key factor in women's decision to run for office. The local nature of municipal government and, for the most part, the relatively smaller size of the constituency served, means that running for local government may be financially more accessible for women than running for electoral office at the provincial and federal levels.

A strong belief that "you can make a difference"

It is also clear that the women who had held or run for municipal office had a strong desire and belief that they could make a difference in their communities. This often connected to early life experiences and encouragement from, and/or observation of, strong role models. Frequently women mentioned that they had been brought up by strong mothers and/or grandmothers who inculcated a strong belief in their daughters/granddaughters that they could be and do anything a man could. Schoolteachers were also often cited as sources of support and encouragement, as were the examples set by women who were already public figures.

A Very Real and Immediate Impact on the Community

Women councillors commented how gratifying being involved in municipal politics can be, confirming their belief that by holding elected office at the municipal level, they can have a very real and immediate impact on their communities. They also suggested that the relatively small size of municipal constituencies (relative to provincial and federal ridings) means that they can have much closer contact with citizens.

The Non-Partisan Nature of Municipal Politics

While the experience and networks of support as a result of participation in party politics is often considered an advantage, some women commented that the non-partisan nature of municipal politics is appealing to them. They like the relative independence of municipal politics: by not having to toe a party line, they can make decisions based on what they believe is best for their constituents. Finally they commented that politics isn't always about the lust for power but rather the ability to make a positive and lasting contribution to their community.

The electoral system as a barrier to women's participation in municipal decision-making

If we accept that a critical mass of women is needed in electoral office to make government truly responsive to women's needs and priorities (FCM, 2004; United Nations, 2002; WEDO, 2001), the international experience suggests that the fastest and most effective way to attain the UN goal of 30 per cent may be through electoral reform.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the predominant single member plurality, "first past the post system" may be detrimental to the election of women (Everitt & Pitre, 2005; Reyes, 2001). Internationally, countries that have legislated proportional representation, quotas, or one man, one woman per constituency, have made the most significant strides in getting women elected at the national, state/provincial, and local levels (Reyes, 2001; Conrad, 2003)

In Scandinavian countries, women's political involvement today has reached nearly 50 per cent, something that was not always the case. In 1945, women made up only 10 per cent of elected representatives in Norway, Sweden, and

Denmark (Henig and Henig, 2001, as cited in Conrad, 2003, p. 87). The increase in women's representation at the elected level is due to three factors: "establishing quotas, adopting a system of proportional representation and making women's participation a priority of public policy. All three strategies working together [are seen as] essential to achieving the final goal" (Conrad, 2003; p. 87).

Closer to home, the recently released (December 31, 2004) report of the New Brunswick Commission on Legislative Democracy emphasizes that changing from a single-member plurality system of representation to a regionally mixed proportional system "is essential to electing more women to the New Brunswick legislature" (p. 99).

The WILG focus group participants had varied opinions regarding the notion of electoral reform. Women with experience of organizations that have instituted quotas for boards of directors were supportive of quota systems, explaining that this approach has been effective in ensuring that diverse perspectives are represented at the decision-making table. They noted that while there had been some resistance among some at the beginning, once the system was in place most people accepted that it worked quite effectively.

Some women expressed concern that they would be elected "because I am a woman and not on my own merits." Others suggested that politicians who currently hold office would find electoral reform threatening. There was no discussion about proportional representation.

Women's Participation as Voters

The right to vote is fundamental to Western democracy. Yet less than half of Nova Scotia's electorate typically exercises that right in municipal elections.[6] The notion of a democratic deficit has been widely debated by politicians, academics, and the media. However, who is exercising the right to vote and who is not remains unknown: Nova Scotia's enumeration records include biological sex and birth date, but the data is not compiled and not released. When we don't know who votes, it becomes difficult to understand who doesn't vote and why, and whether or not voters and their elected representatives are truly reflective of the interests and concerns of the broader population.

The assumption that men and women have the same voting patterns and priorities is also problematic. MacIvor (1996), Gidengil et. al (2000), and McCue and Gopoian (2000) suggest that women's voting patterns can differ significantly from men, depending on the issues on the policy agenda.

Women's Participation in the Public Consultation Process

Public hearings or consultations on a specific issue concerning the community are an important means by which municipal government consults with and solicits direct feedback from citizens on issues, planning, and policy decisions. In the WILG survey, only four municipalities in Nova Scotia (of the 38 that responded) reported that they collect information on who attends public consultations. When this information is not collected, it becomes extremely difficult to gauge how effective public consultations have been at reaching out to diverse communities, how many women versus how many men are attending, and to what degree different people and groups are affected by and interested in certain municipal issues.

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[6] According to Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, voter turnout averages about 43% in municipal elections. In 2004, that number increased to 47%. Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations attributes this to the interest in the Sunday shopping plebiscite

The experiences of other Canadian communities demonstrate how going directly to women and asking them about their experiences, priorities, and perspectives has allowed municipal governments to become more responsive to women's needs and lives.

In the 1980s, a group of women in Toronto started an organization called Women Plan Toronto (WPT). Originally established as a research initiative to investigate women's issues, concerns and perspectives on life in the city, WPT has become a valuable source of research, insight, and assistance to local governments and their agencies. WPT gathers its research by going out directly to women's organizations and women from different walks of life and asking them for their input. Still in operation today, WPT has had an impact on local government decisions and planning regarding a variety of topics -- from urban safety concerns to mobility issues, to housing intensification and zoning bylaws, childcare and transportation (Whitzman, 2003; p. 113).

In Montreal in the late 1980s, a group of planning students and professionals came together to form Collectif Femmes et Ville (Women and the City Collective). Together they educated the city government on women's concerns about safety, housing, social services, and child care and how these could be incorporated in the City of Montreal's 1988 Official Plan. They presented their proposals to the Standing Committee on Urban Planning, and "by 1989, the Mayor had released a report drawing on the Femmes et Ville document and created a committee with the Planning Department to implement their recommendations" (Whitzman, 2002, p.100).

Other jurisdictions have been inspired by the examples above. In British Columbia, a Women in Planning group published a tool kit to help women participate in community planning initiatives. The City of Saskatoon drew on the WPT model and went out to women of many different backgrounds to

ask them "what they liked, disliked and would like to see in order to make the city a safer place." The resultant suggestions "were explicitly linked to policies in the City's 1993 development plan" (Whitzman, 2003; p. 114).

Making public consultations as accessible as possible is important to ensuring that those affected by government decisions have input. The stories above suggest that deliberately approaching diverse communities in their own settings can significantly enrich the public consultation process.

Women's Participation As Members of Municipal Boards, Commissions, and Advisory Committees

Since World War II, the public's expectations of the services they receive from their local governments have increased significantly (Antoft & Novack, 1998; p. 84). To assist with the proliferation of issues they have to address, local governments now administer many services through semi-autonomous boards and commissions, such as utility commissions, police commissions, and regional development authorities (p.85). Other bodies, such as land use planning committees provide input and advice while leaving the decision-making powers to Council (p. 86). Membership on boards, commissions, and advisory committees gives citizens and elected representatives the opportunity to have significant influence on their communities.

The WILG survey of municipalities included questions about the composition of boards, commissions and committees advisory to Council. According to the responses, women comprise about 30 per cent of all members of boards and committees in Nova Scotia, and are chairpersons for one quarter of these bodies. These numbers include both female councillors and citizens who volunteer.

A further breakdown of the numbers by function and issue reveals that men dominate the membership and chair positions of all boards, commissions and committees. However, they are particularly over-represented on committees concerned with issues such as infrastructure, public safety, finance and economic development, and land-use planning. Women are most likely to hold membership on committees concerned with heritage and parks and recreation.

In a discussion about women's input to development planning decisions, Julia Cleves-Mosse (1993) points out that among planners there is a tendency to not seek out women's perspectives unless an initiative or proposal is deliberately designed to benefit them directly (p. 27). Women's issues are often thought of as exclusively those that concern their gender roles, such as child-bearing and child care. However, as participants in the WILG focus groups asserted, women's issues are people's issues and people's issues are women's issues. Women are as concerned about and affected by issues such as clean water, zoning, safe roads and taxes as are men. Their distinct gendered roles and socio-economic circumstances mean, however, that women may be impacted quite differently on these issues.

One example is the issue of clean water. In the event of a water quality problem in a municipality, a boil-water order may be issued. As the primary household manager and care-giver, a woman is most likely the person who assumes the work of boiling water for her family's use. This takes up time in her already crowded schedule. If a family member gets sick as a result of a contaminated water supply, a woman is more likely to be the one who stays home from her job to care for the sick person, thereby compromising her economic security. If the woman herself gets sick, the whole family's care and health may be compromised.

Elected women who attended the WILG focus groups frequently spoke of the difficulty in getting appointed to municipal boards and committees.

Many of them commented that it took years of hard work and service before they were appointed. And when they were, it was often not to the committees and boards in which they had expressed an interest. Their experience and the WILG survey results suggest that those involved in making appointments need to look closely at the assumptions they are making with regard to who is most appropriate for membership on a committee or board. This also underscores the need for transparent criteria for appointments to boards and commissions and ensuring that the selecting bodies have a gender-balanced composition.

Women in Municipal Government Administration

As of September 2005, women make up 13 per cent of the administrative heads of municipal governments across Nova Scotia. This is the lowest representation of women among chief administrators in Canada and stands in stark contrast to the other three Atlantic Provinces. In Newfoundland, more than 70 per cent of administrative heads of municipal government are women, while in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick more than 50 per cent of administrative heads of municipal government are women (Purdon, 2004).

The WILG survey of municipal governments indicates that in the 38 municipalities that responded, women make up 29 per cent of management employees. In contrast, women represent one-third of senior managers and 36 per cent of other managers across all employers in Nova Scotia[7].

More women are needed to head municipal administrations for the same reasons that we need more women in elected office. Government needs to reflect the people and the priorities of the people it serves and the policies and processes it devises have to support that. Senior administrative officials

[7] Occupational Distribution by Gender, Nova Scotia 2002 Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey (cited in McFayden p. 26)

have considerable influence on municipal decision-making, including the processes used to research and develop policy and programs. Senior administrators also play a leading role in who gets hired and who gets promoted within municipal government staff.

The recruitment, development, and promotion of more women to senior levels of municipal government administration are not simply a matter of principle. As the population ages, rural populations decline, and the available workforce shrinks, municipal governments -- like other public sector organizations in Nova Scotia -- face increasing competition for a very limited pool of employees. Dr. Linda Duxbury of the Sprott School of Management at Carleton University notes that in the coming years, for every two people who retire, there will be less than one person in the workforce to replace them.[8] In 2003, women represented nearly half (47.4%) of Nova Scotia's labour force[9]. In the coming years, those who remain in the workforce (women and men) will have opportunities to choose from and will be looking for workplaces that will accommodate their needs and provide them with opportunities for advancement. Duxbury (2005) cautions public sector administrators that in addition to finding ways to attract and retain new employees, public sector institutions must find ways to retain, advance, and develop the employees they already have.

Why Nova Scotia has so few women administrative heads is not clear. Why are women so under- represented at the top? There is little existing research about women's role as employees in Canadian public sector organizations at the municipal level. More research is clearly needed into what is undoubtedly a complex issue. However, discussions with women administrators, staff, and councillors who participated in the WILG focus groups yielded some preliminary insights.

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[8] In a March 2005 presentation to senior government administrators with the Province of Nova Scotia, Dr Duxbury noted that research into workforce change indicates that a 'mass exodus' of employees from the Canadian workplace is anticipated around 2008/09

[9] Labour force by Sex Nova Scotia 2003 Source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM, table 282-0002 (cited in McFadden, 2004)

Approximately one-third of participants in the focus groups were women employed in municipal governments. They represented a variety of municipal staff functions -- from senior administrators to clerical staff. In the discussions about women's participation as staff, municipal employees commented that for many people, municipal government is not something one thinks of when deciding on a career. Many had found themselves in municipal government as a result of a job that had come available; it was only after they were working in municipal government, that they realized that it represented a possible career path.

The comments of a number of women suggest that the hiring and employment cultures of some municipal governments may present significant impediments to women's advancement. One participant commented that it seems that we tend to hire people who share our view of the world -- people like ourselves. If men are doing the hiring, are men hiring men like themselves?

Minority women who participated in the focus groups observed that women from visible minority communities rarely see themselves represented in overwhelmingly white, municipal government. They said that when you don't see yourself represented in government, it sends a message that you don't belong there.

Others suggested that there is a widespread perception that it's "who you know" that gets you hired. They noted that the skills, knowledge, and experience women acquire through unpaid labour are not valued equally as paid employment, even if the knowledge and skills may be similar to that acquired through paid employment. There was also a concern raised by women at lower levels that younger people with formal educational credentials (often male), are being brought in over older people (often women) currently working in municipal offices, rather than career development opportunities being provided for existing employees. While

women at more senior levels indicated that they had been able to access educational development opportunities through Dalhousie University and the University of Alberta, several women in clerical positions commented that they were often frustrated in their attempts to gain access to educational development. They commented that their superiors were reluctant to grant them work time and financial support to participate in courses and workshops, saying that the office could not function without their presence. Women at the lower levels of municipal staff also commented that they often had to rely on their informal networks to get information about upcoming educational events, rather than having it communicated through the formal organizational structure.

This is a concern. Women's disproportionate burden of household and care -giving responsibilities, plus the fact that most women earn significantly less than men, mean that female employees in low-paying occupations are less likely to have the time and money to be able to participate in educational opportunities outside of working hours and at their own expense. If women are not receiving support for educational development within working hours, they face increased ghettoization in low-paying positions. In the past, women have been forced to stay in unsatisfying jobs because of a lack of opportunities elsewhere. However as the workforce shrinks, this may change. Duxbury (2005) notes that opportunities for educational development and advancement are increasingly important to the retention of good employees. In a competitive job market, organizations that do not pay attention to and support their employees' development run an increasing risk of losing them to employers that are willing to provide employees with what they're looking for (Duxbury, 2005).

At the other end of the scale, focus group participants expressed concern that women who want to move into senior positions may have to conform to and adopt the values and behaviours of the dominant male culture to get

promoted and hired. They commented that women in senior roles can also get isolated without other women to turn to for support and mentoring.

Another issue that surfaced several times was a concern among female municipal staff that there is no neutral, third party mechanism that employees can confidentially turn to in the event of workplace conflicts, wrongful behaviour, or incidences of harassment by colleagues or superiors. Representatives from one municipality noted that in their community, employees are able to turn to councillors in the event of problems within the administrative side of the organization. However, most women felt that this would not be possible nor appropriate in their municipalities. They suggested that staff of municipalities needs an ombudsman-like function available to them.

While women from some municipalities expressed a concern that behind-the-scenes staff contributions are often undervalued and disregarded by their superiors, other women noted that being valued and acknowledged for their contribution was part of the appeal of the work they did for the municipality. They commented that they held a good job in the community and had access to educational opportunities and opportunities for career advancement. This suggests, as is to be expected, that the hiring and employment culture vary considerably among municipalities.

Conclusion

Nova Scotia lags behind the rest of Canada and much of the world for women's participation in local government. Women are a tremendous and untapped resource for municipal government: They are active in their communities and they represent an important source of skills, information, and knowledge about local issues. If local government is to become more responsive and inclusive of women and local interests, strengthening women's participation in all forms of municipal decision-making is crucial.

Women need to be counted as voters; they need to be heard in public consultations; they need to be appointed to municipal boards, commissions and committees; and, they need to be elected to municipal councils.

Everyone has a role to play in working to increase women's participation in municipal decision-making. The UNSM, the AMA, individual municipalities, the FCM, individual councillors, community organizations, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, community organizations and citizens can work both separately and together to make a difference.

Finally, since women constitute more than half of Nova Scotia's population, their active participation is necessary to promote and sustain democracy. Encouraging participation among diverse women in society and creating more inclusive and participatory local government advances our democratic principles and promotes trust in our political system.

Recommendations to the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities

Upon review of the research findings outlined in this report, the Women in Local Government Steering Committee makes the following recommendations to the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities:

1. That the UNSM develop and implement a communications plan for a public awareness campaign to educate Nova Scotians on the impact, role, and importance of municipal government in people's day to day lives. The plan should include:

    a. Specific efforts to reach out to diverse women and women's organizations, as well as organizations that work with youth, African Nova Scotians, persons with disabilities, First Nations, immigrants, etc.

    b. A component that highlights municipal government as a viable and worthwhile career option for women (Suggestions from the WILG focus groups included participation in high school, college and university career fairs, providing cooperative education placements for college and university students; participating in job-shadowing programs for youth and adults; providing work placements for adults in job-retraining and career development programs; and scholarships for students interested in municipal government as a career opportunity)

    c. A package of support and informational materials that can be made available to municipal government and individuals to assist them in contributing to the public awareness campaign.

2. That the UNSM work with stakeholders to provide workshops on diversity, gender analysis and affirmative action at UNSM conferences.

3. That the UNSM request that the Association of Municipal Administrators arrange for municipal administrators to receive training in why and how to apply a gender lens in the development of their policies and processes, beginning with a workshop at an AMA conference.

4. That the UNSM work with women's equality-seeking organizations, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and municipal leaders across Nova Scotia to develop and implement an action plan for encouraging women to run for elected office. The action plan should include:

    a. Accessible information sessions on the role and responsibilities of municipal councillors and municipal government held well in advance of the deadline to file candidate's papers.

    b. Accessible, non-partisan campaign schools for women (such as the one held by the Status of Women in November 2004) specific to running for municipal office, well in advance of municipal election periods.

    c. Presentations by women councillors and mayors to diverse women's organizations on what it is like to run for and hold elected office at the municipal government level

d. Encouraging municipal leaders and citizens to approach, encourage and support individual women to run for office

e. Messaging that highlights the positive aspects of holding elected office and the ability to make a difference in the community.

5. That the UNSM work with stakeholder organizations to strengthen the supports for elected councillors, by:

   a. Providing more substantial orientation programs for new councillors that address a broader range of topics than currently offered and include diversity training and training on how and why to use a gender lens as part of policy development and decision-making

   b. developing a mentoring program for new women councillors

   c. holding informal networking events for women councillors on a regional and provincial basis.

6. That the UNSM, in conjunction with the AMA, investigate the feasibility of having a mechanism independent of individual municipal governments that staff can turn to for support in the event of workplace conflicts, wrongful behaviour, sexual harassment, etc.

7. That the UNSM Board, request that the Government of Nova Scotia collect, tabulate, and disseminate publicly voter turnout in municipal elections by age and gender and ,if necessary, amend legislation to allow this to happen.

Opportunities for individual municipal governments

The activities, culture and processes of individual municipal governments can have a profound effect on women's participation in municipal government decision-making. During the course of this research project, it became clear that there are a number of concrete actions that local governments can take to help overcome barriers to women's participation. These include:

- Adopting Codes of Conduct/Behaviour for council meetings
- Providing training to anyone involved in hiring staff or appointing committees and boards on fair hiring practices, and gender and diversity issues
- Setting targets for achieving gender-balance on boards and committees, in senior staff roles, and citizen participation in public consultations
- Having documented, transparent criteria for appointing and hiring for decision-making positions and ensure that the selecting bodies have a gender-balanced composition;
- Training senior management and those involved in the development of policy and public consultations in gender analysis
- Including gender analysis and the collection of gender disaggregated data in the development and setting of policies and procedures
- Consulting directly with the membership of diverse women's organizations to seek input on local government issues
- Training managers in performance management and institute career development planning as part of performance management
- Rotating or holding municipal council meetings and public consultations in venues that are family friendly (or offer child care facilities) geographically dispersed and physically accessible to allow for wider citizen access to meetings

- Providing affordable or subsidized childcare on site at council meetings, board and committee meetings, and public consultations
- Consulting with all councilors to determine a meeting schedule which is the most accommodating for all council members (Some councils are already doing this.)

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Women in Power and Decision-Making, Fourth United Nations Conference on Women, Beijing, China 1995 Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

www.wedo.org/5050/introduction2.htm
The Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) is an international advocacy organization that seeks to increase the power of women worldwide as policymakers at all levels in governments, institutions and forums to achieve economic and social justice, a healthy and peaceful planet, and human rights for all. Their Gender and Governance Program focuses on three strategies: It raises awareness about the under-representation of women in decision-making positions and the policy difference that women make when represented in critical numbers; is spearheading a global campaign called 50/50 by 2005: Get the Balance Right!; and it develops information resources and advocacy tools on strategies to achieve equal representation in decision-making bodies. The 50/50 campaign was launched in 1999 with the goal of increasing the percentage of women in local and national politics worldwide. Since it began the 50/50 campaign has been adopted by 154 organizations in 45 countries.

APPENDIX

Women in Local Government Project Survey Results

Survey Results

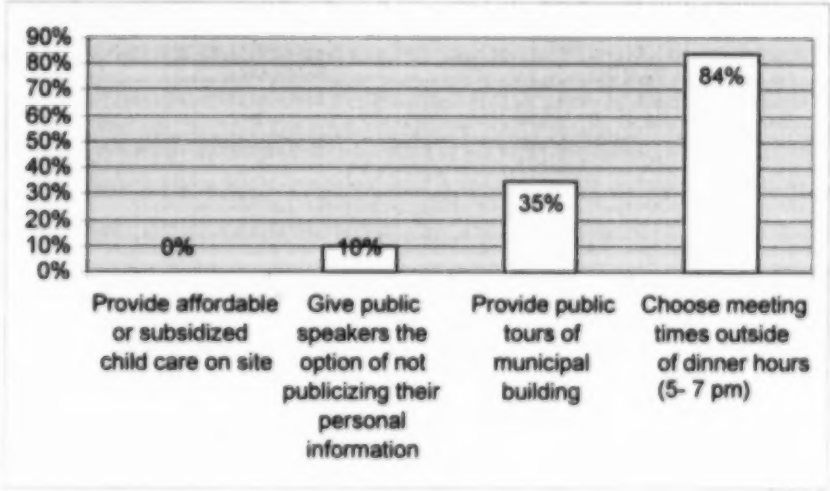
The WILG survey was sent to the chief administrators of all 55 municipalities in Nova Scotia in June 2005. Thirty-eight of the 55 filled out the survey, a response rate of 69 per cent.

The survey consisted of six questions addressing the following topics:

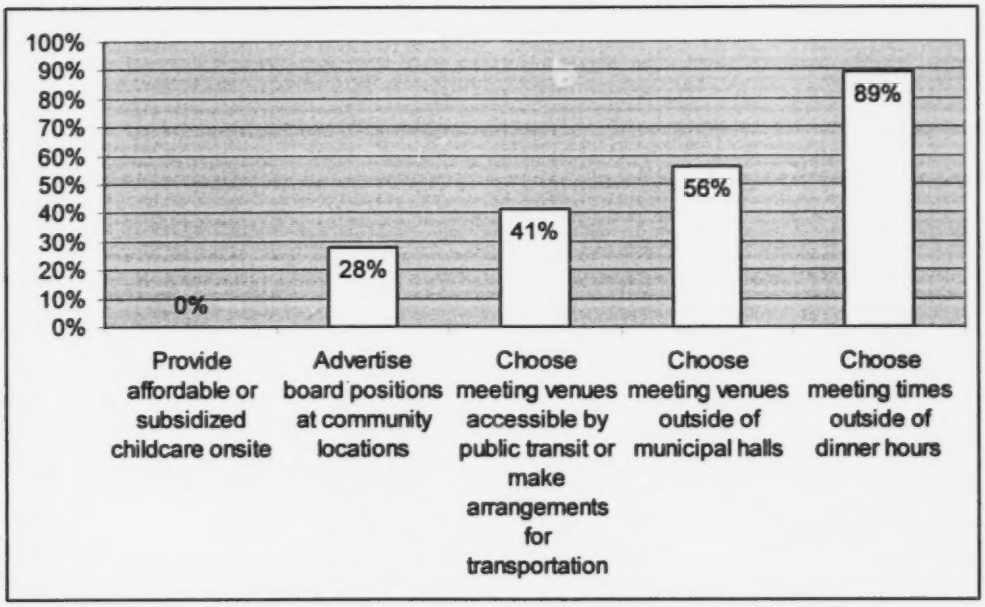
- what measures communities have in place to accommodate and encourage women's participation
- the breakdown of their boards and committee members and municipal staff by gender
- the existence (or lack) of affirmative action policies and diversity training for councillors and staff

While there was a relatively high response rate, not every survey was fully completed.

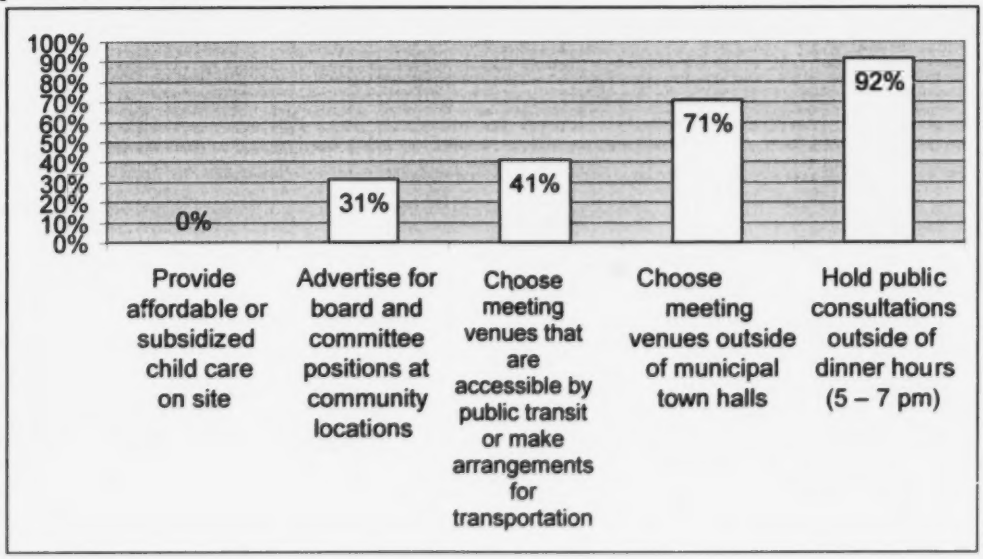
Percentage of respondents that undertake the initiatives to assist citizens attending council meetings



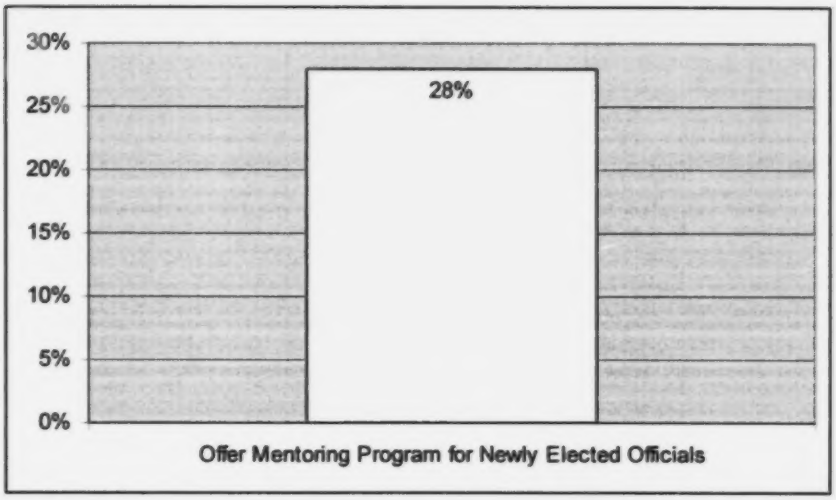
Percentage of respondents that undertake the following initiatives to assist elected and non-elected board, commission and committee members in attending meetings



Percentage of respondents that make efforts to encourage and assist citizens in attending public consultations



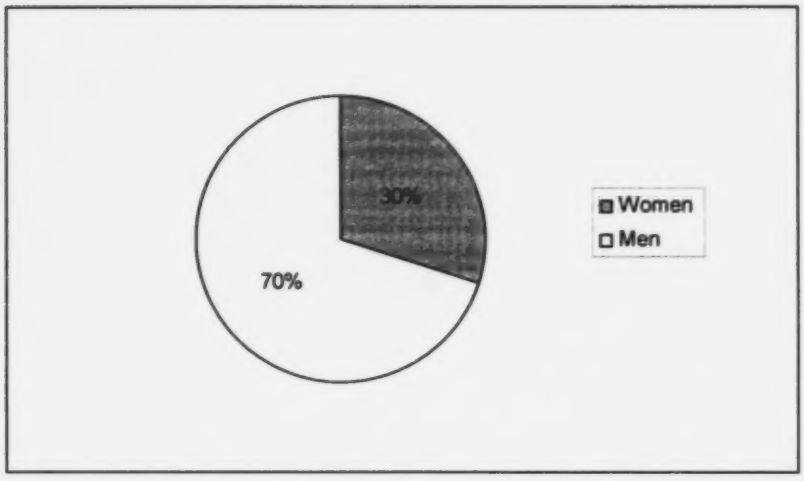
Initiatives to Assist Elected Officials



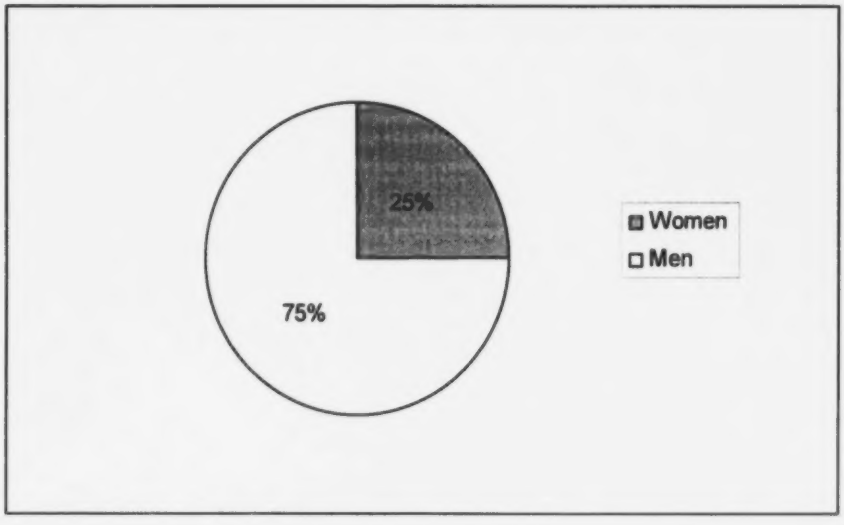
Initiatives that support public education on municipal affairs

Initiative	Percentage
Provide easy to understand information to the public on current regional projects, upcoming items at council, and council decisions	73%
Encourage municipal politicians to make connections with and speak to local women's organizations/community groups	28%
Provide materials (website/brochure) to citizens on the roles and responsibilities of municipal government and officials	47%
Provide support for voting in municipal elections (eg. flexible poll hours, locations accessible by public transportation	68%

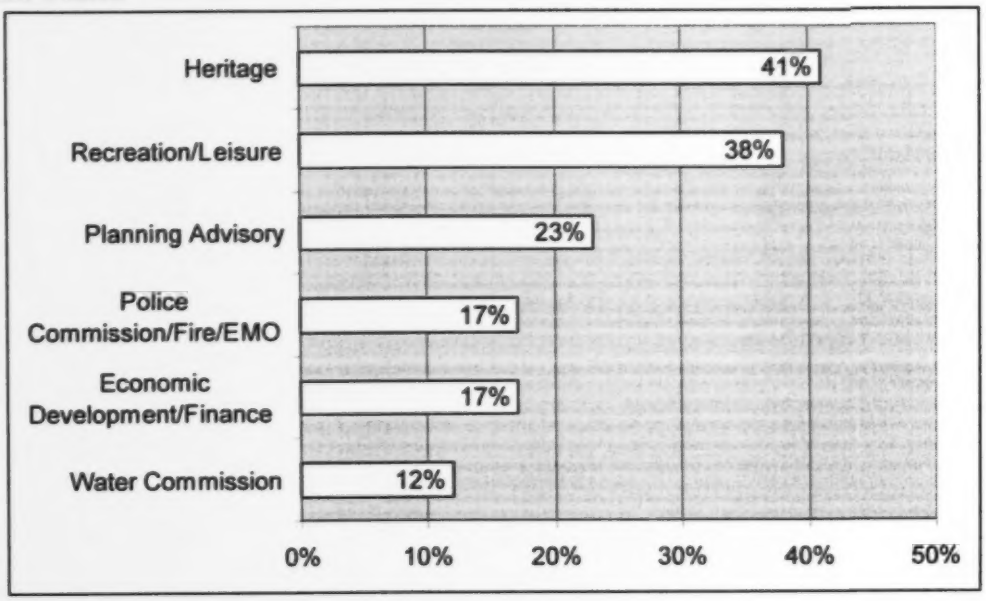
Percentage of the membership of public boards, commissions, and committees advisory to council that are women and that are men



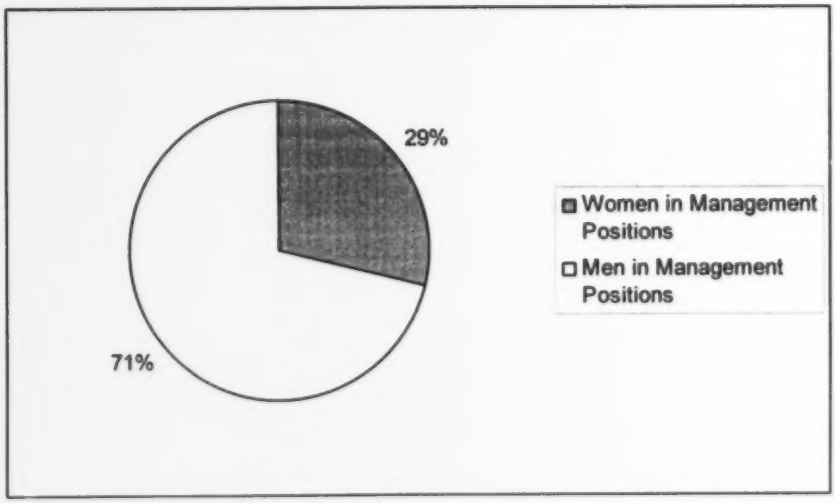
Percentage of public boards, commission, and committee chairs that are women and that are men



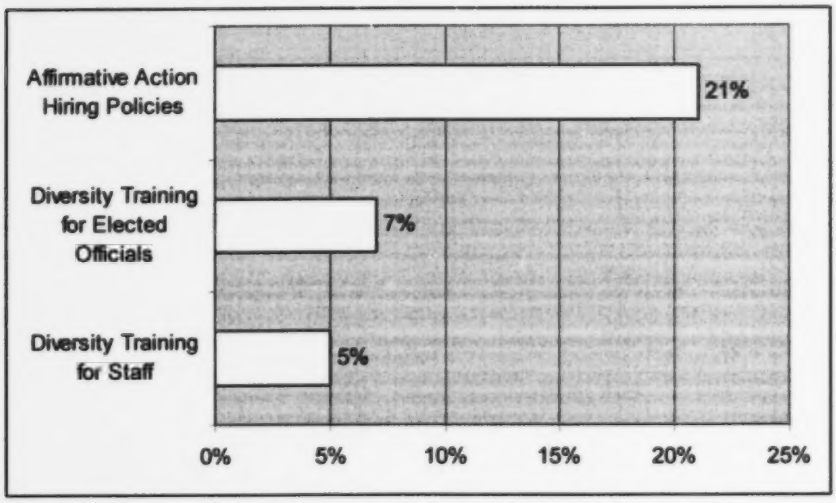
Percentage of the membership of specific public boards, commissions and committees that are women



Percentage of management positions held by women and held by men



Percentage of respondents that have affirmative action policies and offer diversity training



Percentage of respondents that keep statistics on the names and numbers of citizens participating in public consultations